DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

Designed to evaluate high school or college writing programs and writing instruction, this instrument includes six different questionnaires that provide information about the foundations of the writing program; teachers' assumptions, goals, and plans; classroom activities as observed by colleagues; the quality of writing assignments; the quality of teachers' instruction. (This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts, Volume 2," published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. The TRIP review, included here as an introduction to the instrument, describes the instrument's category (writing), title, author, date, age range (senior high school to postsecondary and adult), purpose, and physical characteristics.) (HTH)

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Evaluating Instruction in Composition (EIC).

The measurement instruments contained in this document have been reviewed in a monograph (cited below) edited by William T. Fagan, Charles Cooper, and Julie Jensen, for The Research Instruments Project (TRIP), and funded by a grant from the Trustees of the NCTE Research Foundation:

Measures for Research and Evaluation
in the
English Language Arts
Volume II

The purpose of the editors has been to select and review measurement instruments pertaining to all aspects of research and evaluation in the English language arts, e.g. language and language development, literacy, literature, reading (including comprehension, teacher-pupil interaction, etc.), writing, and teacher knowledge and attitudes. In order to make some of the actual instruments reviewed more readily available, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) has cooperated with the editors by processing selected instruments into the ERIC system (see the 42 documents assigned Clearinghouse accession numbers CS 207 904-945).

CS 207909

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Category: Writing

Title: Evaluating Instruction in Composition (EIC)

Authors: Committee on Teaching and Its Evaluation in Composition of the Conference on College Composition and Communication

Age Range: Senior High to Post Secondary-Adult

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To evaluate high school of college writing programs and writing instruction.

Date of Construction: 1982

Physical Description: EIC includes six different questionnaires which provide information about the foundations of the writing program; teachers' assumptions, goals, and plans; classroom activities as observed by colleagues; the quality of writing assignments; the quality of teachers' comments on student writing; and students' perceptions of the quality of instruction.

Validity, Reliability, and Normative Data:

EIC was designed by specialists in college writing instruction to provide comprehensive information about many aspects of a writing program. The developers of EIC argue that all widely-used questionnaires for collecting students' perceptions of teaching are inappropriate for writing courses.

No reliability or normative data are reported for EIC.

Related Documents:

CCCC Committee on Teaching and Its Evaluation in Composition, "Evaluating instruction in writing: approaches and instruments," College Composition and Communication, 33, 1982, 213-229.

1

Information About Foundations of the Program

In order to evaluate successfully a writing course, the evaluator must consider:

1. The teacher's or faculty member's values in writing and assumptions about what it means to "teach composition."
2. The students' background and preparation.
3. The goals of program.
4. The goals of the individual teacher.
5. The teacher's stated criteria for awarding grades for individual papers or for the course or both.
6. The writing assignments.*
7. The teacher's reasons for ordering the assignments as he/she did.*

2

Questionnaire for Teachers

The questions and items in this section are not designed to be summarized in a score or on a graph. The questions are intended mainly to help teachers bring to consciousness features of their own techniques as instructors in composition, and to help them articulate their assumptions, goals, and plans in teaching writing. By developing this awareness, teachers will be able to compare their own perceptions of their work with those of others—colleagues, students, perhaps administrators—who furnish information on the instruments in this package, and will be able to understand better the reasons for the success of their work as well as the areas in which they might strengthen their work.

Part I

1. What are the successive writing assignments in your class?
2. Why did you present the assignments in that order?
3. What changes would you make in these assignments if you taught the course again?

Part II

Please indicate the importance you attached to each of the following.
In this course, I tried to teach my students how to—

	Major/ Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Not Relevant
1. define an issue to write about	1	2	3	4	5
2. come up with ideas for use in writing	1	2	3	4	5
3. state a main idea	1	2	3	4	5
4. support main ideas	1	2	3	4	5
5. use appropriate details	1	2	3	4	5

*Some information about these items is gathered in later instruments in this package.

	Major/ Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Not Relevant
6. locate sources of details	1	2	3	4	5
7. organize papers	1	2	3	4	5
8. recognize different tones in writing	1	2	3	4	5
9. select appropriate words	1	2	3	4	5
10. plan papers before writing	1	2	3	4	5
11. revise papers	1	2	3	4	5
12. revise the organization of papers	1	2	3	4	5
13. revise sentences	1	2	3	4	5
14. revise ideas	1	2	3	4	5
15. correct their own mistakes in punctuation and grammar	1	2	3	4	5
16. use a dictionary when needed	1	2	3	4	5
17. adjust their writing styles according to the purpose of their writing	1	2	3	4	5
18. adjust their writing styles according to the needs of their readers	1	2	3	4	5
19. learn new words	1	2	3	4	5
20. take essay tests	1	2	3	4	5
21. judge their own writing	1	2	3	4	5
22. judge other student's writing	1	2	3	4	5
23. ask questions about problems they face in their writing	1	2	3	4	5
24. use other people's comments to help them improve their writing	1	2	3	4	5
25. extend the principles learned in this class to writing in other classes	1	2	3	4	5

Part III

Indicate how frequently your class engaged in—

	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Not Relevant
a. individual conferences (or tutorials)	1	2	3	4	5
b. class discussion of student writing	1	2	3	4	5
c. class discussion of writing	1	2	3	4	5
d. exercises in manipulating sentences	1	2	3	4	5
e. studying formal grammar	1	2	3	4	5
f. prewriting exercises	1	2	3	4	5
g. correcting errors in sentences	1	2	3	4	5
h. small group activities	1	2	3	4	5
i. practice in revising	1	2	3	4	5
j. essay writing in class	1	2	3	4	5
k. listening to lectures on composing theory	1	2	3	4	5
l. studying or learning from non-print media	1	2	3	4	5

Part IV

1. What were the most successful features of this course?
2. What would you change about the course if you taught it again?
3. How did you explain your grading standards to your students?

3

Evaluating Classroom Activities Through Observation by Colleagues

The person who evaluates classroom performance must keep in mind that the presence of an observer creates an element of artificiality within the class, and must be alert to possible effects of his or her presence on what happens in the class. The observer should be aware, also, of any special circumstances (e.g., proximity to examination periods, other potential stresses on students or teacher) within which the class is taught. In planning for the observation,

the observer should find out how the particular session fits into the plan for the course: the syllabus (explicit or implicit), the sequence of writing assignments, other instructional activities, and the responses students are receiving to their work. The observer should learn the goals of the class and should learn what the teacher intends to have take place. And the observer should plan to share with the teacher the observer's perception of what went on in the classroom, including distinctive strong points and points on which the teacher will want to strengthen his or her work.

With this advice in mind, the observer should consider these questions:

1. Is the focus or goal of the class clear?
2. Is the focus or goal, as it emerges during the class, congruent with the teacher's assumptions, objectives, and plans as identified in preliminary conversations with the teacher (and in the reflections carried on under Document 1)?
3. Is the classroom activity directly related, in a clear way, to instruction in writing?
4. Does the discussion in class focus directly either on the processes of writing or on ways of using language effectively in writing or on ways in which readers might respond to writing (and thus on ways of determining the effectiveness of a piece of writing)?
5. Does the teacher engage the students in learning activities related to the goals for the day's class?
6. Are the teaching techniques and classroom activities appropriate to the preparation and background of the students?
7. Do students seem personally involved in the activities of the class?
8. Does what is taught make sense as advice to writers about writing?
9. Does the teacher's behavior indicate that he or she thinks that the students can learn to improve their writing?
10. Is the teacher audible to everyone?
11. Can the students understand the teacher's language?
12. Does the teacher encourage students' questions?
13. Does the teacher respond to questions and comments in a positive, constructive way?

4

Some Questions to Ask When Judging Assignments for Writing

1. By what means and with what accompanying explanations or models has the assignment been given to students?
2. Has the assignment been clearly stated?
3. Do the students know for sure what they are expected to do? Is there opportunity for questions?

4. Does the assignment guide the student in selecting materials, identifying pertinent questions and issues, and choosing perspectives on a subject? If the student is not so guided, is there a reason why?
5. Does the assignment reflect one or more of the goals of the course?
6. If the assignment is for writing in class, can most students complete it in the time allotted?
7. Is the student invited to define his or her role and audience?
8. Is the assignment appropriate for students at this level?

5

Guidelines for Evaluation of Teacher's Commentaries on Student Papers

1. Do comments or questions address the stated goals of the assignment?
2. Do the comments take into account the writer's goals for writing?
3. Are the comments themselves models of clear prose?
4. Are there some comments that address strengths in the paper?
5. Do the comments identify objectively what the students have and have not done?
6. Do the comments suggest ways to improve the writing either for a revision or a later assignment?
7. Do the comments have a constructive tone?
8. Is the number of comments such that the student can assimilate them?
9. Do the comments explain the instructor's judgments on the writing?
10. Do the comments make suggestions that are appropriate for the student's level of ability?
11. Are the comments specific enough so that the student can tell how they apply to his/her paper?

6

Obtaining Students' Judgments on Their Instruction

The following pages offer a large collection of items for possible use on student rating instruments for courses (or programs) in writing. More items are listed than any teacher or faculty would probably want to use; some items repeat the thrust of other items in different language. The items are arranged in three large groups; two other groups ask for semifactual information, and permit students to comment freely upon the course.

The Committee suggests that teachers and/or faculties in writing make up their own rating instrument for writing courses by drawing from this list the items that reflect their objectives, conceptual framework, and perceptions of

students' needs and abilities. Some teachers will want more items, some will want fewer. Some may wish to add items of their own that address distinctive philosophies or techniques for teaching.

Each item in the list invites a response in categories such as "Agree," "Disagree," "Not relevant." Some users may want to allow five responses, some may prefer four. Instructions will ask students to circle the appropriate response (as they see it), and may tell students that their answers can help the department make changes in the way a course is planned and/or help teachers make changes in the way the course is taught. The questionnaire is designed for anonymity, and students should be assured that they will not in any way be identified.

Part I

I was absent approximately _____ times.
I was late for class approximately _____ times.
I did _____ writing assignments.
The grade I expect in this course is _____
I met with my instructor outside of class _____ times.
I visited the writing center _____ number of times.

Part II

The course helped me improve my ability—

	Very Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All	Not Relevant
1. to define an issue to write about.	1	2	3	4	5
2. to come up with ideas for use in writing	1	2	3	4	5
3. to state a main idea	1	2	3	4	5
4. to support my main ideas	1	2	3	4	5
5. to use appropriate details	1	2	3	4	5
6. to locate sources of details	1	2	3	4	5
7. to organize my papers	1	2	3	4	5
8. to use appropriately varied tones in my writing	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All	Not Relevant
9. to choose words that say what I mean	1	2	3	4	5
10. to plan papers before I write	1	2	3	4	5
11. to revise my papers	1	2	3	4	5
12. to revise the organization of my papers	1	2	3	4	5
13. to revise my sentences	1	2	3	4	5
14. to revise my ideas	1	2	3	4	5
15. to correct my own mistakes in punctuation and grammar	1	2	3	4	5
16. to use a dictionary when needed	1	2	3	4	5
17. to adjust my writing style according to the purpose of my writing	1	2	3	4	5
18. to adjust my writing style according to the needs of my readers	1	2	3	4	5
19. to learn new words	1	2	3	4	5
20. to take essay tests	1	2	3	4	5
21. to judge my own writing	1	2	3	4	5
22. to judge other student's writing	1	2	3	4	5
23. to state for myself questions about my problems in writing	1	2	3	4	5
24. to use other people's comments to improve my writing	1	2	3	4	5
25. to write in other courses	1	2	3	4	5

Part III

After taking this class, I believe that—

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Relevant
1. I am better able to do my writing assignments	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am more willing to undertake writing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have increased confidence in myself as a writer	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am more willing to take jobs that may require writing	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am more willing to take courses that may require writing	1	2	3	4	5
6. writing can help me learn	1	2	3	4	5
7. writing helps me to clarify my ideas	1	2	3	4	5
8. the teacher's evaluation of my writing seemed fair	1	2	3	4	5
9. my writing was treated with respect	1	2	3	4	5
10. my teacher was regularly prepared for class	1	2	3	4	5

Part IV

In this course I was able to—

	Always	Often	Occasionally	Never	Not Relevant
1. understand what the teacher was talking about	1	2	3	4	5
2. ask questions whenever I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5

	Always	Often	Occasionally	Never	Not Relevant
3. disagree with the teacher if I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5
4. join freely in class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
5. understand the purpose of the writing assignments	1	2	3	4	5
6. understand how the assignments related to one another	1	2	3	4	5
7. practice writing for other audiences	1	2	3	4	5
8. share my writing with others in the class	1	2	3	4	5
9. use my teacher's comments to improve my writing	1	2	3	4	5
10. understand my teacher's comments about my writing	1	2	3	4	5
11. understand my teacher's standards for grading	1	2	3	4	5
12. get responses to my writing assignments in a reasonable length of time	1	2	3	4	5
13. confer with my teacher outside of class	1	2	3	4	5

Part V

What were the best things about this course?

What things need to be changed the next time your teacher offers this course?